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ABSTRACT

This sixth grade teaching unit covers Soviet propaganda, communism, relations with the United States, Soviet geography, Soviet arts, and Soviet life. Unit goals address the above content areas, map skills, and an attitudinal goal of helping students to develop a sense of respect for the life of Soviet citizens. Behavioral objectives are keyed to each of the unit goals and activities. Activities include a knowledge and attitude pretest, classroom learning games, discussions, independent and small group research, media image analysis, photo analysis, symbolic activities, a mock Soviet election, analysis of the United States and USSR constitutions, map work, listening to Soviet music, concept webbing, and interviews. The unit evaluation is based on oral presentation, a unit test, and informal conferences and observation. A seven-item annotated bibliography is attached. (JDH)

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THE PEOPLE OF THE SOVIET UNION

By

Joyce Reikofski

Target Group: 6th Grade

Date: April 23, 1986

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Content Outline Page

- I. Soviet Propaganda
 - A. How is the Soviet Union seen in American media?
 - B. How does propaganda affect our perceptions of Soviet life?
 - C. Does propaganda always provide an adequate or total view of life in the Soviet Union?
- II. Communism
 - A. What is communism and a totalitarian government?
 - B. ^{What} are the main differences between a totalitarian government and a democracy?
 - C. What are some strengths and weaknesses of communism?
- III. Relations with the United States
 - A. How is the U.S. portrayed in the Soviet Union's media?
 - B. How does the standard of living in the U.S. compare to that of the Soviet Union?
 - C. How does Soviet media and the differences of the standard of living affect relations between the U.S. and the Soviet Union?
- IV. Soviet Union Geography
 - A. Does the Soviet Union have friendly neighbors?
 - B. How close is the Soviet Union to the United States?
 - C. How does the Soviet Union compare in size to the rest of the nations of the world?
- V. Soviet Arts
 - A. How does music in the Soviet Union compare to music in the U.S.?
 - B. How does art work in the Soviet Union compare to art found in the U.S.?

- C. How does entertainment in the Soviet Union compare to that found in the U.S.?

VI. Soviet Life

- A. What are some important values of the Soviet people(i.e.: family life, education, religion, etc.)?
- B. How does the government affect the lives of the Soviet people(i.e.: freedom of speech, industry, farming, etc)?
- C. How do Soviet people benefit from communism(i.e.: special privileges, better jobs, etc.)?

Goal Page

Knowledge Goals:

1. Students will learn about various aspects of life in the Soviet Union.
2. Students will learn how the Soviet Union is governed and who actually governs the nation.
3. Students will learn how the Soviet Union has achieved it's super power status.
4. Students will learn of the Soviet Union's strengths and weaknesses.
5. Students will learn how the Soviet people view the United States and why they do so.

Skill Goals:

1. Students will use and refer to various geographical maps and globes that show the Soviet Union and the nations that surround or are affected by the Soviet Union.

Attitude Goals:

1. Students will develop a sense of respect for the life of Soviet citizens even though many differences exist between the American and Soviet cultures.

OBJECTIVES

KG=Knowledge Goal

SG= Skill Goal

AG= Attitude Goal

- KG#1-4
AG#1 1. Students will be able to present oral reports which will cover specific aspects of life in the Soviet Union.
- KG#2 2. Students will be able to compare and contrast the Soviet constitution and the U.S. constitution.
- KG#3&5 3. Students will be able to compare the standard of living in the U.S. to the Soviet Union's and make charts which will illustrate their findings.
- KG#4 4. Students will be able to list what they approve or disapprove about the Soviet Union's government and policies, and will be able to give reasons to support their decisions.
- KG#2 5. Students will take part in a Soviet Union voting simulation in order to understand the Soviet voting procedure.
- KG#2&3 6. Students will be able to define the following concepts: communism, totalitarian government, and democracy.
- KG2&4 7. Students will verbalize how it would feel to live under a totalitarian government in comparison to living under a democratic government.
- KG#1
AG#1 8. Students will discuss Russian art, music and entertainment in order to compare it to the art, music and entertainment found in the U.S.
- KG#1-5
AG#1 9. Students will pose thoughtful questions to a speaker who has visited the Soviet Union in order to expand upon their knowledge of the Soviet Union.
- KG#1-5 10. Students will be able to take an active and social role in a Soviet Union Bingo game and a true and false pre-test in order for the teacher to assess learning readiness.
- KG#1&2
AG#1 11. Students will be able to construct a mural which displays various aspects about the Soviet people's values, customs, lifestyle, work, and government.
- KG#5 12. Students will explore and discuss the image of the U.S. which is portrayed in the Soviet Union.
- KG#1,2
3,5 13. Students will be able to list factors about the Soviet Union (which have been covered in the unit) in a webbing fashion.
- SG#1
KG#1-5 14. Students will perform 60 per cent or better on a test which will cover various aspects of this unit.

- SG#1 15. Students will be able to locate various features on the map of the Soviet Union and various nations that affect or are affected by the Soviet Union.
- SG#1 16. Students will be able to use a map or globe in order to visualize the distance that lies between the Soviet Union and the U.S., as well as the vastness of the Soviet Union in comparison to the rest of the nations of the world.
- AG#1 17. Students will verbalize that Soviet people are very much like American people in many ways.
- AG#1 18. Students will be able to distinguish between stereotypes, generalizations, or opinions made about the Soviet Union and facts.

INITIATING ACTIVITIES

OBJ= Objective

- OBJ 10 1. Administer the pre-test called, "The Soviet Union Today". This is a "True or False...Because..." test that is designed to assess what the students know about the Soviet Union. Some of the questions are as follows: 1. The Soviet Union has a constitution. 2. All people in the Soviet Union are communist. 3. There is no unemployment in the Soviet Union.
- OBJ 10 2. Play Soviet Union Bingo(based on Social Studies Bingo from E 325)to assess what the children already know about the Soviet Union and to motivate them to learn more about the nation. Statements in the blocks may include those which are similar to the following: 1. Can name the current leader of the Soviet Union. 2. Can name two items exported from the Soviet Union.
- OBJ 18 3. Using popular generalizations and stereotypes made about the Soviet Union the teacher will bait the students into an argument about the Soviet lifestyle. For instance the teacher may say to the class: "All Soviets are war hungry!" or "All schools in the Soviet Union are superior to those in all other nations." When students disagree with such statements the teacher should ask them to provide proof that she is wrong. The teacher should assist the students in making up a list of topics that they'd like to study which pertain to life in the Soviet Union.

DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES

In the developmental stage, each student should be researching the topic which he/she has chosen from the teacher's master list of topics(ie: family life, entertainment, industry, farming, government, rise of communism, past Soviet rulers, etc.)* The topic that the student picks should be the student's own choice, however the teacher should supervise and encourage the choosing of topics to ensure that all areas are being adequately covered. Each child will be responsible for an oral presentation of his/her topic. Social Studies time will be divided between the time spent in the library doing research work and holding individual conferences with students to assess progress and give aid to the students with their presentations, and time spent in the classroom doing the following activities which are not only supplemental to the students' research and understanding of their topics, but motivational as well.

*All research topics should center around these two themes: 1.) Important values of the Soviet people, 2.) How the government affects the lives of the Soviet people--both negatively and positively.

- OBJ 18 1. Define the term "Propaganda". Study and discuss several forms of anti-Soviet Union propaganda which can be found in the United States' media today. Discuss what can be concluded about Soviet people from such propaganda. Does propaganda provide an accurate viewpoint?
- OBJ 17 2. Show a slide show of contemporary life in the Soviet Union. Include pictures of both sexes of various age groups. Show slides of families and of people taking part in recreational activities. Also include street scenes and events (such as a wedding) in order for children to see a wide range of Soviet activities. Discuss the slides: Are Soviet people very different or similar to American people? In what ways do they differ? Compare the clothing in the slides to American clothing. If I (the teacher) had told you that this was a slide show of life in America would you have believed it? Why?
- OBJ 18 3. Pass out a worksheet that has both factual statements about the Soviet Union and its people, and opinionated statements which may be generalizations or stereotypes. Students should put an "F" (fact) or an "C" (opinion) in front of each statement. After students finish filling out the worksheet, discuss the activity. How can one distinguish fact from opinion? Look for key words such as "all", and "every"; which are cues to an opinion or generalization.
- OBJ 6&7 4. Divide the class into groups of ten (more or less). The groups need to stand in a circle, shoulders touching. Each group member should place both arms into the middle of the circle and grab the hands of two people across from them (They may not hold both of the hands of the same person. Nor can they hold hands with a person standing next to them.) The object is to unravel this human knot, without dropping their partners' hands, so that they are once again in a circle or a figure eight. This activity should be performed once without any restrictions--students may talk openly. The second time students need to get into new groups. The teacher will elect one student from each group as a leader. This person will not take part in the knot, but will give the group instructions on what to do to get unraveled. Group members will not be allowed to talk or act on their own. The teacher will act as a monitor to make sure the leader's orders are carried out and silence is upheld.
- After the activity, discuss with the class how they felt working in the first group compared to working in the second group. What were the strengths and weaknesses of each method? Which way was most efficient? Introduce the concepts of communism, democracy, and totalitarian government. In what way was the second method like a totalitarian government? How was the first method like a democracy?
- OBJ 5 5. Choose volunteers to act as workers or monitors at the polls during a mock Soviet Union election. Create a secret voting booth in the room. Give the rules of voting to the voters:
1. Voters must register their names and identification before

voting. 2. Voters must take a ballot with the communist candidates name printed on it and either a.)drop it in the box, or b.)go into the secret booth and cross out the name before dropping it in the box. Run through a mock election. Why do some people refer to this as an, "empty ritual"? Discuss the differences between Soviet Union and U.S. voting procedures.

- OBJ 2&4 6. Pass out copies of both the U.S. constitution and the U.S.S.R. constitution. Have students list or group the main similarities and differences between the two documents and discuss. Why do you think the Soviet Union has such a constitution? Is the constitution representative of the true Soviet government? Make a class list of the government policies of the Soviet Union of which the class approves or disapproves. Students must back their answers with rational reasons for their decisions.
- OBJ 3&12 7. Discuss how the U.S. might be portrayed in the Soviet Union's media and why. How do the Soviets view life in the United States? Do you think government officials or the communist party feels threatened by the way of life in the U.S.? Why or why not?
- Compare and contrast the average standard of living found in the Soviet Union to that found in the U.S. Divide the class into groups in order to collect data on different variables(i.e.: income per family; availability of food, clothing, luxuries; average life span, etc.). After data has been collected, come together once more as a class and make a chart of the class findings. Discuss the results.
- Go back to the original question, "How do Soviets view life in the U.S.?" Do you think the class results on standard of living influence how government officials portray life in the U.S.?
- OBJ 15& 16 8. Students will be shown a geographical map of the Soviet Union and it's surrounding nations. Have students locate nations that are under communist rule, and nations that are U.S. allies. Does the Soviet Union have friendly neighbors? Look at a globe of the world. Does the Soviet Union come close to having physical contact with any part of the U.S.? How much distance is there between the Soviet Union and Alaska? What lies between Canada and the USSR? In comparison to the rest of the nations of the earth, how big is the Soviet Union?
- OBJ 8 9. Listen to Soviet music(both classical and pop). How does it differ from music composed in the U.S.? View various forms of Soviet art, and compare it to art found in the U.S. Discuss forms of entertainment found in the Soviet Union(theatre, ballet, sports). Can the athletes and performers compare to those in the U.S.? Of what caliber are these people: top, average, or below average?
- OBJ 11 10. During an art period paint or draw a mural of aspects of the Soviet Union which have been studied in the unit. Children

may wish to illustrate something from their own individual research topic, or illustrate something they have learned about the Soviet Union during class activities and discussions. Hang the mural(if possible)in the hallway by the sixth grade classroom.

- OBJ 1 11. Students will present their oral presentations. The reports should last between five and ten minutes. While an individual is giving her/his oral report, the rest of the class must listen closely and take notes; test questions will be derived from information covered in the oral reports. Students may use visual aides while giving their oral reports, or other techniques that will help to achieve class understanding of their topic. If more than ten minutes is required to adequately present a topic, arrangements may be made ahead of time with the teacher to go over the time limit. The teacher should fill in important information which children have left out of their reports or have not covered clearly or adequately.

CLOSING ACTIVITIES

- OBJ 13 1. Students will create a concept web which will begin with the words "Soviet Union" and will include facts that they have learned about the Soviet Union throughout the unit. This activity will be a helpful study guide for the upcoming test over the unit.
- OBJ 9 2. Have Faye Duling, or another U.S. citizen who has recently visited the Soviet Union, come into the classroom to speak about what they experienced while there. Encourage the students to ask Mrs. Duling thoughtful questions that they now have about the Soviet Union, or questions about topics discussed in class that they wish to clarify.
- OBJ 14 3. Administer a test which will be an accumulation of information from classroom activities and discussions, oral reports, and the guest speaker. The test will consist of short essay, short answer, and true and false questions.
- OBJ 10 4. If time allows, repeat the Soviet Union Bingo game before the test. This will allow the students to see how much they have learned about the Soviet Union; it will also be a good review for the test.

EVALUATION

The total unit grade will be based on three components of the unit: oral presentation, comprehensive test, and informal conferences and observation.

40%

OBJ 1

1. The oral presentation grade will be based on the following categories:

1. Knowledge/understanding of topic
2. Presentation adequately covers topic
3. Main points of presentation clearly stated
4. Effectiveness of presentation

The above categories will be checked as one of the following: Excellent, Good, Fair, or Poor. These categories will be assigned point values that in turn will be assigned grade values.

Excellent	= 4.0 = A
Good	= 3.0 = B
Fair	= 2.0 = C
Poor	= 1.0 = D

The point values assigned to each category will be averaged for the final grade.

Example:

Student: John Doe Topic: Family Life

- | | |
|--------------|-----|
| 1. Excellent | 4.0 |
| 2. Good | 3.0 |
| 3. Fair | 2.0 |
| 4. Good | 3.0 |

12.0

$12.0 \div 4 = 3.0 = B = \text{Final Oral Grade.}$

40%

OBJ 14

2. The comprehensive test will be divided into the following three categories: 45% covering information from the oral reports, 45% covering information from activities and discussions from class, and 10% covering information gained from the guest speaker. The test will be scored on a straight scale, with 100 being the maximum number of points possible.

90 - 100	= A
80 - 89	= B
70 - 79	= C
60 - 69	= D
Below 60	= F

20% 3. The informal conferences and observation will be scored on the basis of the following checklist which has been developed by the teacher in order to assess each student fairly. Records will be kept regularly for a comprehensive score.

OBJ 2-13,
15-18.

1. Listens well to others.
2. Respects others' thoughts and opinions.
3. Volunteers own thoughts and opinions.
4. Participates actively in small and large group activities.
5. Contributes meaningfully to class discussions.
6. Can thoughtfully discuss subjects covered in class with the teacher.
7. Shows and/or expresses an interest in the subject matter.
8. Performs to the best of his/her own ability.

Students will be evaluated by the following categories and point values:

Always	= 4.0 = A
Often	= 3.0 = B
Sometimes	= 2.0 = C
Rarely	= 1.0 = D
Never	= 0.0 = F

As with the oral presentations, point values for the informal conferences and observations checklist will be averaged for the final grade.

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Davidow, Mike. Afghan Diary. Moscow, Soviet Union: Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, 1984. Afghan Diary provides, "the truth about Soviet soldiers in Afghanistan," from a Soviet viewpoint.

O'Connor, John R. The New Exploring the Non-Western World Workbook. New York, New York: Globe Book Company, Inc., 1983.

This is a workbook which review facts from the text. Some map skills are reviewed as well.

O'Connor, John R. The New Exploring the Non-Western World Workbook Answer Key. New York, New York: Globe Book Company, Inc., 1983.

This small pamphlet provides the teacher with answers to the workbook(of the same title)worksheets.

Schulze, Fred and Livermore, Gordon. The USSR Today: Perspectives from the Soviet Press. 6th edition. Columbus, Ohio: The Current Digest of the Soviet Press, 1985.

The USSR Today is an overview of the Soviet newspapers and periodicals which are published weekly. It is printed in english.

Schwartz, Melvin and O'Connor, John R. The New Exploring the Non-Western World. New York, New York: Globe Book Company, Inc., 1983.

This sixth grade student text may serve as an adequate base for the study of the Soviet Union and other non-western nations.

Schwartz, Melvin and O'Connor, John R. Teacher's Guide to The New Exploring the Non-Western World. New York, New York: Globe Book Company, Inc., 1983.

This teacher's guide(to accompany the text of the same title) lists objectives and procedures for the use of the text; no deviations from the text are offered.